



KORN FERRY

BREAKTHROUGH SCHOOLS



Confidential Position Specification
President & CEO

April 2021

CONFIDENTIAL POSITION SPECIFICATION

Position	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
Company	Breakthrough Public Schools (“BPS” or “Breakthrough”)
Location	Cleveland, OH
Reporting Relationship	Board of Directors
Website	https://breakthroughschools.org/

ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

Breakthrough Public Schools is seeking a forward-leaning, experienced leader who can sustain our strengths, while setting our future direction and leading the next phase of our work to ensure superior academic results and a culture that is both rigorous and joyous - where scholars and staff literally want to “run to school.”

Our next CEO will embrace a newly consolidated Board and develop a talented group of professionals to create an updated vision and strategic plan that will enable the network to dramatically enhance its impact on the students, families, and communities it serves. To harness the opportunities that lie ahead for the network, our next CEO will inspire a resilience and fortitude of culture that is dedicated to excellence through measured outcomes and success, yet not afraid to take risks and learn from failure.

In 2009, three of Cleveland’s top stand-alone public charter schools discovered the challenges of operating individually and decided that sharing administrative functions would help them operate more efficiently and enable them to serve many more students. As a result, Breakthrough Public Schools was formed in 2010 with a commitment to increase educational options for Cleveland families by growing a network of distinctive school options that prepare area students for success in life. BPS has grown from three to twelve schools during its first decade by intentionally opening schools in some of the most disadvantaged neighborhoods in Cleveland, including St. Clair-Superior, Lee-Harvard, Union Miles, Cudell, and two in Glenville. Today, each campus contains two schools: one elementary and one middle school. The campuses include: Citizens Hampden, Citizens East, Citizens Southeast, Preps Cliffs, Preps Woodland Hills, and Preps Willard.

Today, BPS is the highest-performing network of free, public charter schools in Cleveland, Ohio, serving more than 3,600 students. BPS is also nationally recognized, being rated the best Charter Management Organization (CMO) in Ohio by the 2017 CREDO study.¹ The Breakthrough Public Schools network remains committed to setting its scholars on an early pathway to lifelong success in school, college, and career.

¹ Breakthrough was ranked #11 nationally in reading, #16 nationally in math, and #1 overall in Ohio among 277 public school networks studied nationwide by CREDO at Stanford University in performance relative to its home district.

The Breakthrough schools are widely regarded as the best schools in their neighborhoods, yet too many scholars are still below grade level; the BPS team recognizes that our scholars need more to compete successfully with graduates from suburban and non-public schools and to truly achieve choice filled lives. During the last 18 months, the network agreed to move from a shared service organization supporting three distinct educational models, to a true charter management organization responsible for the academic program of all twelve schools. BPS' new Chief Academic Officer assembled a talented Network Academic Team (NAT) which is implementing: common curricula, aligned assessments, progressive exceptional student education practices, equitable staffing standards and professional development for school leaders and teachers—all of which are designed to improve student achievement. While this Board supported 'Better Together' initiative envisions a promising future and embodies network-wide support, it is a significant undertaking, and as with any major change, there is an ongoing need for strong leadership in the realization of full implementation. Our next CEO will have the opportunity to support the Network Academic's Team vision for the pursuit of true academic excellence through an approach designed to address whole child education and issues of equity across the entire school community and broader communities.

In addition, the BPS community skillfully responded to the COVID crisis, moving all instruction online within one core academic model. As the BPS network begins to transition back to robust in person learning, the new CEO and the organization will continue to leverage technology and lessons learned from the COVID period to enhance the academic process providing access and differentiation to scholars.

BPS has embarked on a self-reflective and socially conscious journey to become a leader in the practices of an inclusive, equitable, anti-racist organization at every level. The network has embraced equity training and dialogue and is commencing the development of a multi-year equity work plan. Our next CEO must provide unparalleled leadership and experience in guiding the community and organization through this process leading to actionable change and defined outcomes.

Organizational growth and sustainability must prioritize, first and foremost, consistent academic excellence across the network. The [BPS Mission, Vision, and Values statements](#) are in need of a refresh based on the dramatic changes to the educational landscape locally and nationally, and based on the potential of BPS' new Better Together approach. Our new CEO will have the opportunity to guide the Board and network through a visioning process to update these core documents and further define and align the network's commitment to equity and true academic excellence. A full strategic planning process is envisioned in which the CEO, in partnership with the Board, Friends of Breakthrough (FOB), and stakeholder groups, will develop a plan that includes both short and potential longer-term goals of serving more scholars, creating new schools, deepening financial support, enhancing partnerships locally and regionally with educational entities, nonprofits, and corporations, and elevating the national reputation of the network.

Breakthrough plays a critical role in the individual schools' communities, Cleveland charter schools, Cleveland public school system, and the state of Ohio. Our next CEO will have the opportunity to serve as the public face within the network and be a champion for Breakthrough in the community, lifting up community voices, centering the work in lived experiences, and relentlessly striving for increased outcomes for our students and community. Like Cleveland, BPS is large enough to make a difference, yet nimble enough to innovate and truly impact the educational outcomes for our scholars. BPS aspires to be a network of schools that others visit

from around the country to emulate our practices and the successful experiences of our scholars and families.

Friends of Breakthrough

Friends of Breakthrough Schools (FOB) is a non-profit organization with its own Board of Directors, serving as a critical strategic partner in the work of BPS. It is arguably one of the most effective advocacy and fundraising organizations in the charter school sector nationally. FOB is responsible for closing the gap in public funding that Breakthrough Schools needs to overcome each year, as well as working with community, business, and political leaders to build city and statewide support for high-quality public school options for all children in Cleveland. FOB is led by John Zitzner, who is also the remaining founder of Breakthrough and was the founder of the Prep Schools (E Prep and Village Prep). The President of FOB also serves as a key media/PR spokesperson for the network. FOB, through its advocacy work, has been instrumental in helping our scholars have access to Cleveland levy funds and high-quality dollars specifically for high performing charter schools under the current Ohio Bi-Annual Budget.

An initiative being developed by FOB, in partnership with Breakthrough's commitment to supporting alums beyond high school as they transition to college and the workforce, is the Alumni Success Program. This project is in development to build and maintain the "ecosystem" of Breakthrough as an enduring connection for scholars and their families post 8th grade. One of the goals of the new initiative is to commit to and communicate that Breakthrough will stay in contact with and support scholars through high school, postsecondary education, and a first permanent job in an ongoing career.

For further information on financial and academic annual reports, please visit:

<https://breakthroughschools.org/resources/annual-reports/>.

You will also find an organizational chart as an appendix.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

The CEO of BPS oversees the day-to-day management of the charter school network. Through the collaborative working relationship with the seven-member Network Leadership Team, and partnership with the board, the CEO will drive strategic vision and implementation of the enhancement of academic excellence, financial sustainability, and the operational capabilities of the Breakthrough Network.

The CEO is responsible for sustaining and building the positive reputation of Breakthrough Public Schools (BPS) and strengthening ongoing relationships within the network, the Greater Cleveland community, and the broader education reform movement in ways that build trust and allow BPS schools, scholars, and families to further grow and thrive.

With respect to additional responsibilities, the CEO will...

Set and Implement a Strategic Vision and Aligned Priorities

- Design and develop, in concert with the Board and FOB, Breakthrough Public School's strategic vision and goals.

- Manage and align execution of a senior executive team across all functions to implement the organization's strategy, including key organizational initiatives, goals, and objectives, and execute against annual plans, ensuring meaningful prioritization, clear metrics, and accountability for performance.
- Work with the Chief Academic Officer and the Network Academic Team to support BPS's emerging academic vision (i.e., one that strives for academic excellence, while embracing an equity lens and driving the latest and most evidence-based approaches in K-8 education).
- Work in partnership with leaders across the network to embrace excellence in all aspects of schooling (academic outcomes, student experiences, school culture, staff culture, talent management, family engagement, etc.)
- Partner with the President of Friends of Breakthrough and the FOB team to creatively and strategically build a clear and intentional plan for how BPS can build its community support in ways that will meet its strategic vision and goals as well as future institutional needs.
- Inspire and lead the network's work as an inclusive and anti-racist organization that is a model for other local, regional, and national organizations on the path towards proactively interrupting the historic consequences of concentrated poverty and systemic racism.
- Promote an environment across the network of integrity, dignity, high performance, commitment to excellence, meaningful collaboration, and continuous improvement that values learning and commitment to quality and equity.

Transform Network Management, Focusing on Positive Culture and Accountability

- Support the Network Academic Team's transformation and implementation efforts to build the foundation for future academic excellence, including development of appropriate short- and long-term metrics.
- Inspire and engage a team across all functional areas, establish priorities across the network, set objectives, monitor performance, and assign accountabilities.
- Manage and lead the fiscal health of the organization; ensure that the network-wide planning and budgeting process maintains a sound financial basis for the organization and supports both short-term and long-term needs and the objectives of the organization.
- Enhance the organization's responsiveness and operational effectiveness as it continues to scale and serve more students by upgrading processes, procedures, and reporting.
- Continue to develop and implement a streamlined organizational structure that attracts and encourages talented team members to achieve excellence; develop and implement internal policies and procedures that facilitate the success of a diverse population of team members.
- Engage a diverse group of stakeholders to ensure all voices, especially those closest to the schools and scholars, are valued and heard including intentional partnerships with the families we serve.

Maintain Robust Board Engagement and Partnership

- Work closely with the Board to develop BPS's strategic vision and goals.
- Support the new consolidated board structure in adopting and implementing best governance practices.
- Maintain frequent contact and a robust partnership with the Board Chair, including by leading in the development of an efficient board agenda that is contextualized to annual plans and goals that support the networks strategic priorities.
- Keep the Board informed of the organization's progress, activities, and challenges, providing accurate reports and annual budget to the Board.

- In partnership with the Board Chair and Governance Committee, identify, cultivate, recruit, and effectively onboard new potential board members that meet the values and talent needs of the organization, and support its networking connections and diversity initiatives.

Champion Breakthrough through Meaningful External Relationships

- Serve as the public face and official spokesperson within the network.
- Thoroughly understand BPS and its values, stakeholder interests, key public and private partners, market landscape, and maintain a good working relationship with sponsors.
- In concert with the President of FOB, build strong relationships across the Cleveland educational, nonprofit, corporate, and civic organizations.
- Assure proper representation of the organization in front of all audiences and effectively communicate with scholars, families, teachers, and school communities served by the network.
- In concert with FOB, advocate for BPS within regional/state-wide and national arenas.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE/QUALIFICATIONS

Our CEO will be an active listener first, who by example, embodies a transparent management style that inspires and engages others. The successful candidate will be a mission-focused, strategic, and visionary leader with experience in change management, holding multi-functional teams accountable, and developing a performance focused culture among a group of diverse and talented individuals focused on excellence. The ideal candidate should be highly self-aware, courageous, value diverse perspectives, and bring a mix of the following experience, qualities, and established track record in order to lead an organization operating in a dynamic environment.

- Demonstrated leadership (e.g., education, corporate, or nonprofit) experience in fostering and growing an organization toward actionable outcomes.
- Deep understanding of the issues most pressing for youth development and the communities served by Breakthrough Public Schools. Thought leadership in education and/or charter school leadership experience is a plus, but not required.
- Performance visioning and implementing a strategic plan resulting in consistency, intelligent growth, enhancing an organization's capacity/impact, or strengthening a network and its constituents.
- Business acumen and knowledge of finances and budgeting. Ability to maintain clear fiscal priorities, oversee a sustainable budget, and lead the network's short- and long-term financial planning.
- Sophisticated people leadership and management skills. Track record of empowering a diverse group of professionals and content experts, entrusting, and amplifying the work of others.
- Passion for the mission of BPS and fervent commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Ability to lead an organization in these areas.
- Experience working with a volunteer Board and developing high performing governance principles.
- Established record of cultivating strong partnerships with local/state-wide community-based organizations, corporations, foundations, government entities and other key stakeholders in the education space, as well as managing engagement amongst external stakeholders to aid in driving strategic goals.
- Expertise in change management in a complex organizational structure and a track record

of driving positive cultural change. Ability to gain organizational and partner buy-in across a distributed, diverse network and achieve accelerated growth while building trust across all levels of the organization.

- Experience serving as a coach and mentor. High comfort levels with giving and receiving constructive feedback.
- Working knowledge of local, regional, and state-wide public policy and strategies to propel educational advocacy.
- Outstanding communications and diplomatic skills, including the ability to speak with empathy, authenticity, and credibility across multiple constituencies.
- Creative problem-solving mentality that is resilient in the face of obstacles and demands excellence at all levels of the organization.
- Ability to greet new ideas with a “yes, if” attitude and know when to say, “no, and why.”
- Leadership by respecting the dignity of every person and modeling behaviors that demonstrate appreciation and respect for all teams and individuals.
- A high degree of self-awareness, emotional intelligence, warmth, approachability, and humility.

EDUCATION

An undergraduate degree from an accredited college or university is required.

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Breakthrough Public Schools is an equal opportunity employer and will not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or national origin.

Breakthrough Public Schools Leadership Org Chart

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